

EdReach Newsletter - Week of October 5, 2007

Four schools win National Blue Ribbon awards

Four South Carolina nominees have been recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools. The program honors public and private K-12 schools whose students achieve at the highest levels or have made significant progress in closing achievement gaps. To see which schools were recognized, visit:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=845>

First Person: South Carolina Teacher of the Year

Special education teachers know the difficulties their students face when trying to reach No Child Left Behind objectives. Ann Marie Taylor gave voice to those concerns on behalf of her colleagues recently. To read what about her concerns, go to:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/documents/October5Taylormessage.pdf>

A national leader in single-gender classes

South Carolina is a leader in offering separate classes for boys and girls. The goal is to have these programs available to every child within five years. To read complete article, visit:

<http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5jppUbBpESJRKZxFon2dJftREb9gD8RVV1BO0>

Message from Jim Rex

Dear friends:

Recently, as students across South Carolina went back to school, I spent several weeks traveling our state on my 2007 Back to School Tour. In meetings with teachers, parents, students, and communities, I was reminded that the people of the Palmetto State support our public schools.

My message to them was clear, and it's a message I'm continuing to take to every corner of South Carolina: The time has come for an aggressive approach to education reform, and we must work to get public input and ultimately build the support needed to accomplish a great deal next year.

When the Legislature convenes in January, we will present a package of proposed legislation, regulations, and modified policies designed to help the South Carolina Department of Education:

. Create a new system of fiscal accountability for South Carolina's schools and school districts. We will seek authority to work with schools and districts

to provide fiscal support and oversight and intervene if resources are not being managed effectively. We will seek incentives and resources to support consolidation of districts when it's feasible and there's community support to do so.

- . Lay the groundwork for a new system of fair and equitable funding by addressing the way South Carolina raises and distributes all state revenues, with a special focus on public schools.

- . Create a new system of public school choice that encourages and rewards innovation and allows parents, students, teachers, and schools more flexibility when choosing public education paths.

- . Reform the 1998 Accountability Act to increase diagnostic testing, decrease costs, and reduce the amount of time spent testing for accountability purposes. To view Accountability Act, visit:

<http://www.scstatehouse.net/code/t59c018.htm>

- . Create safer and healthier schools by reducing crime and disruption and improving the physical environments of our schools.

- . Elevate the teaching profession with fair, results-based compensation reform, including a pay increase for teachers, the launch of a pilot program on team teaching, and a new statewide public relations campaign aimed at changing the image of the profession.

Grassroots support is essential to advance these reforms during the 2008 session, when lawmakers will need political courage to tackle big issues during an election year. As I have said before, we're not talking about the kind of "courage" needed to go into battle in Afghanistan or Iraq. We're talking about the kind of political courage that requires leaders to take risks to ensure a successful future for our children and our state.

I hope you will join me during the next weeks and months by talking to your legislators and other key decision makers about these important issues. And I hope you will call on me if there's anything I can do to help build support for reform in your community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jim Rex

Rex on The Road:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/superintendent/Rex-on-The-Road-Schedule.html>

In The News:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/>

On The Air:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/On-The-Air.html>

Dates to Remember:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Dates-to-Remember.html>

Resources for Teachers:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Teachers.html>

Resources for Students:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Students.html>

Resources for Administrators:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-School-Administrators.html>

What Others Are Saying:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Education-RelatedEditorialOpinion.html>

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